



U.S. Department of Justice

Brett L. Tolman

**United States Attorney
District of Utah**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 19, 2008**

**CONTACT: MELODIE RYDALCH
801-325-3206
801-243-6475 (CELL)**

NEWS RELEASE
***SALT LAKE CITY WOMAN INDICTED
FOR POSSESSION OF
STOLEN MAIL***

***POSTAL INSPECTORS SAY SHE HAD 368 PIECES
OF MAIL INVOLVING 90 DIFFERENT VICTIMS***

SALT LAKE CITY – Elise Ann Peterson, age 44, of Salt Lake City, arrested last week after deputies from the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office found numerous pieces of mail and packages addressed to different names and addresses in her car, has been charged in a federal indictment returned Thursday evening with one count of possession of stolen mail.

She faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted of the charge. Defendants charged in federal indictments are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty in court. She was arraigned on the charges this morning in federal court and entered a not guilty plea. A trial in the case was set for late February. She has been released on special conditions, including a requirement that she reside at the Cornell Corrections Center.

According to a complaint filed in the case last week (a copy is attached), a woman approached a deputy Dec. 10th in the area of 2145 E. Lincoln Lane in Salt Lake City and told him she witnessed a woman driving down the street and stealing mail. She provided a description of the vehicle and a license plate number. The vehicle was located and stopped at 1945 East 4500 South. In a subsequent search of the vehicle, officers observed numerous pieces of mail in the front seat and various packages in the back seat – all addressed to different names and addresses.

According to the complaint, Peterson told officers she had recently lost a job, was kicked out of her house, and was down on her luck. She said she had started stealing mail the day before. She said she had thrown envelopes and package material away from the day before but kept some women's clothing and a CD ROM from the packages. She estimated that on Dec. 10th, she had stolen mail from at least 50 mail boxes and taken numerous packages off the front porches of residences in the vicinity of Holladay, the complaint says.

U.S. Postal Inspectors, who joined the investigation, say the investigation is continuing, but they now believe she took 368 pieces of mail addressed to 90 different victims.

Captain Chris Bertram of the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, Chief of Police Services for the City of Holladay, says the case is a good reminder to everyone to take extra precautions with their mail and packages. "During the holiday season residents should be aware that mail theft may be on the rise. Now is a good time to take some extra precautions. If you can, remove your mail from the box soon after it is delivered. Locking mailboxes are a good option to protect you holiday cards, gifts, and personal information that may show up on your bills. Also, please report any suspicious activity in your neighborhood to local law enforcement."

Anyone who believes they have been a victim of mail theft or mail fraud can report it to U.S. Postal Inspectors at 1-877-876-2455.

####